1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

and may devote his time to his bride. He further alleges that the young couple do not exhibit their affection in public, but that one may conclude from various signs that mutual affection continues even in advanced age. Jealousy, however, often comes into the open, and women are particularly suspicious of their husbands. The usual factors leading to the disruption of a marriage are cited as disagreement over the upbringing of the children, idleness of either party, the disputatious nature of the women, or the irascibility of the men.

Sexual relations are maintained during menstruation; Schebesta mentions the fact that the only restriction is during the final stage of pregnancy and for several months following childbirth. In some regions, he adds, there is also a restriction on sexual intercourse between the husband and any woman following the birth of a child to his wife. Such a statement evidently implies an acceptance of extramarital intercourse in other regions, yet he also claims that adultery is considered as a moral transgression offending the divinity; when committed with a married woman, it is criminal. Some allowance is made for a man who cannot have relations with his wife (as during a period of sex taboo); intercourse with an unmarried woman is then generally not considered as adultery. An itching body and birth of twins are, among some

[P 181- D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

At [P. 216-C]
sundown they return to their hut, which they 881
enter, and start singing the special *elima* songs [533]
taught to the new initiates by the old woman in
charge. The women of the camp sit outside and
also sing, having armed themselves with whips
made from the vine brought by the girls.

The menstruating girl will have sent word to [613]
her lover, who may be of the same band but
must be of a different lineage. He must fight his
way into the hut, through the women armed
with whips and against the shower of missiles
hurled at him by the girls of the *elima*. In the
old days, say the Mbuti, the fighting used to be
serious, and sometimes people were killed. The 881
young man, if successful in gaining admission, 836
had to pay an ax for the privilege of deflowering
his maiden. He remained with her all night. The
next day he was bound with vine and kept a
prisoner in the *elima* hut until evening. He was
then washed and rubbed with ashes and allowed
to leave.

From then onward any eligible young man [331]
(i.e., not of the same lineage as the girl) could [613]
try his luck. If he happened to be the husband [337]
of one of the women guarding the hut, she could

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 221-C]

married life free from the normal household chores. 669 57 585

Unlike Schebesta's description of passionate lovers who, as married couples, in no way exhibit their affection in public, both premarital and postmarital sexual relations among the net hunters seem equally open, if not quite equally free. Flirtations among unmarried boys and girls of the same band, providing again they do not openly flout exogamic convention and do not result in childbirth, arouse no interest among the adults other than casual gossip. Married women, while as incorrigibly flirtatious as ever, are not expected to have sexual intercourse with any but their husbands. On the other hand, no social convention prevents the husband from having sexual intercourse with unmarried girls, though he does so with care to avoid unpleasantness with his wife. 836 837.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

838 married men sleeping together. The two age groups do not mix, but
513 among themselves members of the same sex think nothing of sleeping close to each other and deriving mild sexual satisfaction from the physical contact. They state very carefully rules as to how to lie, with legs thrown backwards around the other's legs, or even around his hips or waist, and they say one may entwine legs while lying front to front, though it is not considered good to hold each other too closely with the arms. The thought of any sexual intercourse taking place,
[578] however, is greeted with apparent horror, and homosexuality is never alluded to except as a great insult, under the most dire provocation. There is, however, a dance in which the sexes are effectively reversed, and which is danced with the utmost humor, but the role of which
[535] I could never exactly determine. The dance, *ekokomea*, is dealt with later in the context in which it occurs; namely, at the time of the *molimo* festival.

837 If a considerable amount of sexual liberty is allowed the youths, a
834 fair amount is at least said to be taken by the younger married hunters. I have not, however, been able to record a single instance of a marital dispute involving the band that arose out of infidelity on either side. There are few restrictions on sexual intercourse, though the villagers state many on behalf of the Mbuti. The married hunters, as do the youths, regard the hunt as an opportune time for ac-
841 tivity of this kind. At menstruation, which is a time when a village
[842] woman is under the strictest ritual prohibitions, the Mbuti attitude is that it all depends on whether or not you want children, as this is when conception is most likely to take place. There are those who enjoy sex at this time, and those who find it distasteful. The only restriction is that a wife should inform her husband, or a girl her boy friend, that she is "with blood" so that he will know.

846 Immediately following childbirth is a rather vague period, some-
837 times stated as days, sometimes more grandiosely as years, when intercourse is forbidden. Unfortunately I was able to follow up only on three instances of childbirth, but in each of these the Mbuti fathers did exactly what they said they would do; two of them refrained from intercourse with their wives for about a year, during which time they flirted with as many girls as they liked, and did not deny open gossip
846 that they were "sleeping around." This is the generally accepted pat-
853 tern, the reason being given that a woman can only feed one child at a time, so she must not become pregnant again until her last child is weaned. This may be from one to three years. If during that time

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

sion, during which any latent dispute might be aired. I could not definitely trace any heightening of reciprocal prestations between the individuals concerned, but it could have taken place in divers ways without my knowing it.

12. A number of disputes arising over food indicate trivial domestic disagreements, and seldom reach major proportions. A wife is late in cooking her husband's food, or cooks it badly; he spills some precious oil or fails to catch any game on the hunt. Such disagreements are confined almost entirely to the younger married couples, and they usually settle them by beating each other. If the beating gets too severe then the older women intervene, slapping both boys and girls soundly. If a marital dispute is more serious it may still emerge through a trivial incident in the hopes that it will be settled peacefully. If it is ignored, or mistaken as another petty squabble, then a more serious incident has to be created.

Baumbao, Tungana's eldest son, was having trouble with his wife, Tabakali. She was frequently away, back with her parents, and was suspected of having innumerable liaisons with other men. Baumbao said that this was particularly bad because of the *molimo* that was going on at the time. She had changed her hearth when she married him, and was now a member of this hearth, and she had to contribute to the *molimo*. He first brought the issue up simply by accusing her of cooking badly, and slapping her so hard that an old widow intervened, hitting Baumbao on the back with a burning log. Then everyone agreed that Tabakali was indeed a bad cook but that Baumbao knew that when he married her.

Baumbao took drastic measures. He took down the baskets full of offerings to the *molimo* from the *molimo* hearth, uprooted the sticks and the vine marking the site, and threw the lot onto the ground. While doing this he was busily saying that the *molimo* was empty. He said he had dreamed that his dead sister, Beselinda (naming her), had appeared to him in a dream and told him it was time someone made a good *molimo* trumpet and stopped using drainpipes.[7] She told him to make one and, having made it, to use it and then keep it carefully and not let it rot. He had done this and had been supplying

[7] As described elsewhere (Turnbull, 1961), the Mbuti on one occasion made use of some metal drainpiping they found in the local administrative center. Recognizing its musical potentialities, they stole two lengths and used them as *molimo* trumpets. Everyone agreed that the main thing was that the sound was undeniably good, but the more conservative elements strongly felt the lack of the identity between the conventional trumpet (made of a forest wood) and the forest itself.

A recently married Mbuti girl, while in the village, slept with a villager. On returning to the hunting camp the first youth she met (Pepei, totally unrelated) beat her up severely, throwing her to the ground, holding her by one arm and kicking her. Nobody intervened, even her parents, and not a word was said about the incident.

That evening Pepei complained to the camp that no girls would sleep with him because he was an orphan, but when he began to make allusions indicating that this was one reason why he beat up the girl, Moké broke in and said that the only reason girls didn't sleep with Pepei was that he was so old. He was about nineteen.

18. It is seldom that within a camp a girl will go after one of the married men as blatantly as did Biyokenama, one of Tungana's daughters. Moreover, Biyokenama's father was distantly related to Masisi, the father of her lover, Ageronga. One morning she went so far as to follow Ageronga down to the section of the stream where the men bathed, taking off her cloth as she went. Ageronga's wife, Ambelema, a husky maiden, went in pursuit, hurling abuse. Biyokenama was heard yelling that Ambelema had no business suggesting such dreadful things; how could anyone think that she, Biyo, would flirt with her "brother"? But Ambelema had seen enough and began fighting. Tough as she was, she lost three teeth and came running back to the camp in tears. Biyokenama prudently took off for the village.

Everyone waited for Ageronga, who eventually came wandering in and went up to Biyokenama's mother and said he wanted three hundred francs, one for each tooth her daughter had taken from his wife. He said Biyokenama followed him without reason, that he wanted nothing to do with her, that she was a nuisance. Nobody believed this, but it was clearly a statement of loyalty, and sympathy swung to his side. It was agreed, in a discussion in which mainly youths took part, that Ambelema should not have said such dreadful things to Biyokenama, that even if true they were better not said; but the blame was more firmly placed on Biyokenama, and her mother was urged to take better care of her in future.

19. Marital disputes that are overheard but not deliberately forced on the attention of the band are ignored for the most part. If they are noisy and keep people awake, there may be complaints or there may be some ridicule. Certainly a fight going on between husband and wife inside a hut is followed with zest by all the youths and some of the younger married couples. These may even stand around watching

2: Turnbull E-6 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

the hut shake, ready to catch whoever comes flying out first and prevent further damage.

Sometimes after such a squabble the young man and wife will equally loudly make up, so that everyone can hear, and will then emerge from the hut hand in hand and walk up and down the camp in ostentatious amity. This is considered a very good thing.

The custom of sister exchange, and the lack of any system of patrilocal residence, however, lead to conflicts of loyalties, and brothers or sisters find themselves drawn into disputes that are not strictly theirs. Ekianga was the cause of one such situation that continued for months, manifesting itself in a whole series of apparently unrelated disputes.

He had three wives, the youngest of which, Kamaikan, was the sister of Amabosu. Amabosu's wife, Amaloku, was in turn Ekianga's sister. Kamaikan was not only the youngest of the wives but by far the prettiest, and Ekianga ignored his marital obligations to the other two wives, even to the point of retaining favored portions of the game for Kamaikan. And only with Kamaikan would he sleep.

The other two wives responded in different ways. The oldest, Arobanai, ostentatiously built her own house and did nothing for Ekianga's. She said she was finished with her husband; if he wouldn't sleep with her she would sleep with his child. She phrased this in a way that made it sound rather incestuous as a form of insult, but everyone agreed that it was good for her to keep herself and her children out of Ekianga's hut.

Loku, the middle wife, had no children, and she retaliated simply by occasionally going off to join another band and letting it be known that she was available for temporary liaisons, owing to her husband's incapacity. This again was a blow at Ekianga's vital spot, his pride. But still he slept on with Kamaikan.

When Kamaikan became pregnant, Loku and Arobanai both rejoined Ekianga, thinking this was surely their chance. But when a boy was born, Ekianga still showed no signs of changing his ways. Arobanai brought her complaint to the band by striding up and down the camp listing all her grievances against her husband, one after the other. Moké came out and agreed that it was bad but that it was something that should be settled by them, and not made an issue for everyone else. But Amabosu now felt he had to intervene, and he sided with Arobanai, saying that Ekianga was doing a bad and dangerous thing continuing to sleep with Kamaikan. Everyone agreed

3: Turnbull E-8 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

tall," he said, "but we call him Ebamunyama, because his father killed a buffalo, and he hunts with us in our forest."

We left early in the morning. It would have been earlier if Kenge had not found an agreeable girl to sleep with, who insisted on cooking him an elaborate breakfast. But we finally got away about an hour after sunrise and headed eastward. The ground was much more hilly than in the Epulu area, but the forest itself was much the same: tall and grand, dimly illuminated by the same filtered light. Underfoot the ground was even more clear of vegetation, as for the most part we were well above the streams and rivers. It was more rocky, and we passed a number of caves, where our guide, an elderly Pygmy with a serious face that kept breaking out into wrinkled smiles, told us that we could pass the night if we were delayed, or if his friends had gone on to another camp. I did not much fancy the idea, and on looking inside one grotto I liked it even less; it was damp, and full of rotting leaves where some earlier travelers had made themselves a bed. There was barely room to sit up, and if it rained the water would certainly have drained into the cave.

We passed several trees of a kind I had not seen before, and Kenge said he had seen them only at the extreme northern boundaries of the Epulu district. The roots climbed into the air, gigantic gnarled spirals, almost as thick as a man's body, joining the main trunk which towered above. Our guide told us that the Mabudo called this the "elephant tree," because they always took refuge in one if they were attacked by elephants. He dodged inside one to show us, hiding behind the roots. Even a Mabudo would have been able to stand upright with perfect ease. But the roots were close together, and an elephant could only get its trunk between them, he explained. And then the Mabudo sliced it off with their machettis. He imitated the action, laughing at the ridiculous picture he presented, trying to be the elephant and the Mabudo at one and the same time.

Kenge asked in amazement if the Mabudo actually came so far